varied between 158 to 161 million hectares during the period 1999-2000 to 2004-05. However, in 2002-03 this area decreased to about 149 million hectares because of severe drought which affected several States in the country. In the subsequent years, because of better rainfall in monsoon season the area under foodgrains and commercial crops again increased to 160-161 million hectares. The details are given in the table below:

Crops	Area (Million Hectares)					
	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
Foodgrains	123.1	121.0	122.8	113.9	123.3	120.2
Oilseeds	24.3	22.8	22.6	21.5	23.7	27.0
Cotton	8.7	8.5	9.1	7.7	7.6	8.9
Sugarcane	4.2	4.3	4.4	4.5	4.0	3.6
Jute & Mesta	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	0.9
TOTAL:	161.4	157.7	160.0	148.6	159.7	160.6

For increasing area under cultivation more areas are being brought under irrigation. As per the latest information only around 40% of land under cultivation has been brought under irrigation. The other thrust areas include promotion of water and soil conservation through watershed approach, implementation of 'On Farm Water Management for increasing crop production in Eastern India' by exploiting abundant ground and surface water resources and implementation of National Horticulture Mission for promotion of sowing of horticulture crops.

New variety of wheat by ICAR

1817. SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that the scientists of Indian Institute of Agricultural Research have developed a new variety (Pusa Gold) of wheat;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is a fact that the seeds of new variety of wheat are ready

to be sowed by farmers, if so, the rate per kilogram of this variety alongwith places where it will be available to farmers with full details thereof; and

(d) whether Government are aware of the percentage of protein and nutrition present in this variety of wheat and the duration of harvesting of the crop alongwith the quantum of profit that would accrue to the farmers?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) and (b) The Indian Agriculture Research Institute, New Delhi has developed a wheat variety Pusa Gold (WR 544) suitable for very late sown irrigated conditions for growing in the National Capital Territory of Delhi. This variety is released for Delhi State.

(c) The seeds of this variety are available at Indian Agricultural Research Institute, New Delhi for the use of farmers. It is being sold at the rate of Rs. 15/- per kg.

(d) The protein content of this variety varied from 11.5 to 12.0% when grown under late and very late sown conditions. Its duration is about 90 to 100 days when sown in January. This variety will benefit the farmers who are growing wheat under late sown conditions. The average yield of this variety is about 35 q/ha under very late sown conditions.

Conference of KVKs

†1818. SHRI PYARELAL KHANDELWAL: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the decision taken with regard to new objectives and new activities set in the conference of KVKs last month;

(b) whether discussions regarding the difficulties faced by KVKs have been held in this regard; and

(c) if so, the measures suggested to remove these difficulties?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) organized a National Conference on KVK on 27-28 October, 2005 at New Delhi.

The discussion focussed on the status of the readily transferable technologies, empowerment of KVKs with the technologies in a system

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.